



## ***Progress on Promising Plans***

### **Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Project**

Leadership Group Meeting Summary

February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Bell Harbor Conference Center

2211 Alaskan Way Pier, International Promenade

### **Meeting Objectives**

Pat Serie welcomed the group, outlined the agenda and introduced Secretary Doug MacDonald and Mayor Greg Nickels.

### **Mayor Greg Nickels**

Mayor Nickels stressed the importance of fixing the seawall in conjunction with addressing the viaduct. He also emphasized that we are in a critical time with the legislature right now and that we need to communicate to them the need for funding. There were two letters passed around the table for signatures.

### **Secretary Doug MacDonald**

The legislative issue is very difficult. The pressures and the priorities are many. Today, the question of risk plays into what needs to be done. If people ask what is 35 million dollars going to pay for? We'll tell them it's an amount of money that allows us to get our arms around it NOW. It won't be easy given the pressures and priorities at hand. The best thing to do is to turn it over to the engineers.

### **Significant Progress Made**

Maureen Sullivan, Washington State Department of Transportation Project Director, conveyed the urgency of fixing the viaduct and seawall and spoke of the progress that has been made since the last Leadership Group meeting. Sullivan reviewed the fast-track schedule that the project is on, and the work being doing to get feedback from the community. The project has now moved beyond concepts and will be working on getting feedback on four design plans. She spoke of the many opportunities that currently being presented:

- Opportunity to increase transportation access and choices throughout the corridor
- Opportunity to redefine Alaskan Way right-of-way
- Opportunity to make better physical activity linkages to different neighborhoods
- Opportunity to improve the environmental conditions along the corridor
- Improving freight mobility in the south
- Improving pedestrian traffic, increased open space
- Improving access to and from South Lake Union
- Reconnecting the street grid; improved linkages

### **Cost Estimate Validation Process**

Dave Dye, Washington State Department of Transportation, Urban Corridors Office, and John Reilly, John Reilly Associates International, Inc. spoke of the variability of cost.

Any one number is contingent upon a certain set of assumptions, if the assumptions change so does the cost. The level of detail available in a project helps determine the cost estimate. The goal in this project is to integrate planning, environmental and engineering processes, advance high-risk engineering items, and identify and quantify items that affect project cost (i.e. politics, environmental, schedule and phasing) in order to get a better estimate. WSDOT is also working on a uniform Cost Estimate Validation Process (CEVP).

*John Reilly*

Strategy, structure, continuity of management are all very important factors in developing cost. The tendency is to be optimistic when it comes to big projects; they often end up being twice what was originally planned. Key project requirements are:

- Public understanding and acceptance of the project – “buy-in,” support
- Funding – availability, stability
- Ability to set a *realistic* budget and schedule
- Ability to *meet* a realistic budget and schedule

### **Progress on Promising Plans**

Tom Madden, Washington State Department of Transportation, Engineering Manager, and Bob Chandler, Seattle Project Manager reviewed the designs currently being considered.

Tom reviewed the design concepts; cut and cover tunnel, aerial structure, mined tunnel etc. and then gave an overview of the four design plans.

Bob ran through the different seawall options. Stressed again the importance of the seawall being considered in this process due to seismic vulnerability. He also reviewed the opportunities associated with each plan and with respect to each section; north, central and south.

#### North Opportunities

- Reconnect street grid system over Aurora Avenue
- Integrate with potential improvements in the Mercer Street corridor
- Improve access to and from South Lake Union and the Seattle Center area

#### Waterfront Opportunities

- Improve the waterfront for people – ‘opening Seattle’s front door’
- Increase open space and improving transit access to the waterfront
- Integrate with ferry access improvements -- pedestrians and vehicles
- Limit construction impacts by integrating solutions for the viaduct and seawall

#### South Opportunities

- Maintain and enhance economic vitality by improving freight mobility – Interbay, Duwamish, Port of Seattle, South King County
- Add access to stadium areas, I-90, and I-5
- Improve connections at the Spokane Street Interchange

**Q. Do you have access from Elliott there? (North Design Plan A) Paige Miller**

The Sculpture Garden poses a challenge. They are on a faster timeline than we are so it poses some special challenges but also some opportunities.(Chandler)

**Q. Is there any reason that the north of Denny portion couldn't go all the way to Roy? (Tom Graff)**

Plan D shows some real promise of stitching these areas back together. (South Lake Union)

**Q. You also are closing Broad in that option, correct? (Yes, we would close Broad as a through street)**

This would suggest that you could keep this roadway in operation for a significant amount of time. (Viaduct etc.)

**Q. On the North one, you can get on but can you get off as well? Is the speed limit going to be 35 mph?**

**Q. On all of these options it's hard to tell where the access is. On/off ramps.**

There are many opportunities to make connections in South Lake Union. There are some great possibilities here and we will be working with partners to evaluate these.

Ferry parking and commuting will be an issue throughout the process and we just want to highlight the fact we are thinking about it. (Chandler)

**Q. Ferry access, your assumption is that we will be focusing on Royal Brougham in the future?**

**Q. Thank you for tracking the connections that can be made. Streetcars and monorails could connect people east/west (John Coney)**

**Next Steps**

- Continue to develop design plans
- Identify a preliminary preferred design plan June/July
- Cost estimate validation results
- Continue community outreach – upcoming open houses
  - Downtown – February 25
  - Burien – February 26
  - Ballard – February 27
  - West Seattle – February 28
  - North Seattle – March 5
- We need you!
  - Talk to the groups you represent

- Suggest who else we should be meeting with
- Distribute project information at your events

**Peter Hurley**—First, I want to echo John’s comments about reconnecting streets. We are operating in an environment where the money is limited...I’d like to challenge you to change your paradigm a little. I’m concerned with a proposal being shelved because there are other things going on and money is limited. Three specific strategies I’d like to throw out there are:

1. “\_\_\_\_\_” reduction....
2. Pricing...
3. Taking a look at HOV priority. Lower cost ways to move more people. More mass transportation.

**Ralph Pease**—The access being in the center of the city is kind of nice. My biggest concern is what is going to be going into the waterfront....retail etc.

**Dan Mathis**—Very impressed with the level of detail of the project, I’m here to learn, relatively new and just trying to take it in.

**Steve Leahy**—Same...trying to soak it all in. Concerned about cost. Which will address the greatest need for the least amount of money?

**Tom Tierney**—I think what you’ve brought here is through the south, central and north you’ve allowed us to mix and match already and access things a few different ways. We’re not sure of which option works best for freight yet but we want to thank you for addressing it. Through the various ways, I think that a number of things are being addressed.

**Paige Miller**—Couple of thoughts... There has been a lot of discussion of getting folks uptown, but for the waterfront how does one access it if using the high-speed routes? If we could eliminate that ugly structure but still solve the movement of people that would be nifty. Reconnecting the grid for Queen Anne is really good land use. Looking at land use for the city and thinking about some mixed-use opportunities QA would be great.

**Jim Young**—Options that address taking care of the seawall are good. Parking is another thing to think about.

**Lee Copeland**—I would think badly if alternatives A and B are still being considered. C and D seemed to have the most promise and I hope that this group is further ahead than this. Too much of the waterfront may be given over to the traffic lanes versus the whole pedestrian experience through the central waterfront. I would like to see it integrated more into the alternatives. The plaza on the east side should be brought into the waterfront and it should all be integrated...should be designed as one. Alternative D in reconnecting the grid etc. is very intriguing and from the standpoint of cost, would you take into account the potential revenue through taxes, redevelopment and development and how that can contribute to defraying the costs?

The Sculpture Park needs to be considered seriously when we move forward. Belltown—new access and further development. The one concern I have goes back to the first presentation in terms of the project and budget etc. Is that going to add significantly to the costs and risk probabilities—when we get into more comprehensive planning I want to consider that.

**Judy Runstad**—I would encourage you to go back and look at your objectives because when you go into the EIS process you go back to the objectives. When you are doing the cost analysis, you have to look at the impact of a cut and cover etc. I think you are on the right track but I do think that it needs some careful, strategic thought.

**Paul Tomita**—I think you have made some significant progress. Particularly Alternative D in reconnecting South Lake Union and Queen Anne. I liked the trolley and it's scope. In D especially I'd like to look at the Monorail and opportunities to be had in coordinating there. I hope that in any of the options there are bike lanes. I guess I am a little dismayed it doesn't seem as if HOV or bike lanes or mass transit is addressed thoroughly. Is there going to be a temporary seawall?

**Tom Graff**—I would reiterate that options A and B are unacceptable. If you need to use them as cost comparisons that's fine but we shouldn't waste too much time on them. Options C and D are really the only ones to consider. I think the Sculpture Park is a very important thing and it *absolutely* must be considered when planning and the fact that they are breaking ground in 15 months needs to be kept in mind. I don't think you should decimate the Seattle Center plan and it should be considered in further planning. Who said that this was going to be a toll road? Parking underneath the Viaduct should be thought of as well. Can we stop referring to the Broad Street "over-pass," it's an underpass.

**Joni Earl**—Up around Broad St. remember there is a commuter rail plan and also keep in mind the Monorail.

**Joel Horn**—We need to get even more serious about how transit fits into all of this. I have a policy concern, in the first meeting of this group I thought this was to address current capacity, what this seems is that we are creating a very attractive package but then have a fundamental flaw with making it more enticing for people to use and thereby add to the problem and make it a bigger problem.

**Patty Otley**—Rail system is pretty fragile and constrained. There aren't very many options of moving things around. Alternative A we are not certain how it works particularly during construction. In the other three alternatives where the new structure would essentially be in the current alignment it splits the yard in two and takes away nearly half of the operating space. Was there any thought given to joint rail and road facilities?

**Don Royse**—I definitely agree that A should not happen. D has so many city-building possibilities and dividing into three sections makes sense. D is very exciting

and starting to connect South Lake Union and connecting Queen Anne would just help change the face of the city for the next 100 years.

**Mary McCumber**—I would echo what Peter Hurley mentioned about pricing. We should be considering pricing for all major construction projects. You are not going to just look at one corridor and then go on, they are going to look at all the projects at once. You can't just single out one project, you have to think regionally and think as a whole.

**Richard Conlin**—I value some of the boldness of thinking here but I am thinking about long-term return. What I think is important is integrating the land use and how do we make this a corridor really effective. Useful for freight. Concerned about transportation impacts around the structure. Keep things flowing during construction? For all those reasons D, with some work on TDM, makes a whole lot of sense to me. The extension of the street grid and uptown, side benefits of Mercer etc. Instead of thinking about the cost/price tag, try thinking about the other benefits as well. I think you should think about the returns on investments. D is really a neat looking project. I share the concerns as to whether or not this is a viable option.

**David Goodyear**—One last piece in terms of freight....SR 509 in terms of freight mobility and its relation to the viaduct is a really neat thing to try and think about. Possibly think about integrating it into the plan if there is a way to do that.

**Stephen Lundgren**—Doing no harm. We have the opportunity to help the health of our economy. A simplification of the transportation corridor is a good thing. I'm glad you are thinking about the seawall as well. We will have to sell this to people. We can create more capacity for alternative modes of transportation. You are always going to have vehicular traffic coming across the south sound. You are already increasing the ferry tolls, how the tolls are implemented if there is any need to be looked at carefully. We are beginning to get real ambitious here and that's good but some of those areas are going to have to fund those changes themselves.

**Ron Posthuma**—Considering the seawall and the viaduct is smart. We should look at potential for phasing. I was intrigued by the possibilities in the north end. We need to get some cost numbers on the table relatively soon because without that we won't know whether or not we can go forward. Streetcars.

**Bruce Agnew**—How does this process fit into the grand scheme? I just agree with the fact that A and B don't seem feasible, need to think about multi-modal transportation. Tolls need to be thought of on a region-wide basis and not just in one place. BNSF, we need to think about dovetailing efforts.

**Steve Erickson**—North, south, central segments are useful for understanding options. For each of these options we should think of common criteria, local criteria for the area segment and then you can look at each of these plans and through some process you can probably come up with a relative scale for each plan. By doing that, you would be able to for each area evaluate why and by how much a certain plan is valued

over the other. Versus some visceral feeling. It would be a way of focusing the conversation and taking it out to a larger group of people and explain why you've chosen one over another. There are definite benefits at looking at the expanded system in making connections in south lake union etc. Looking at the north end, there are some of those options that recognize the extent of the traffic that extends up through Aurora. I would like to propose one expanded benefit for the North end—access (bypass) through Elliott? If the state and the city would feed us the information as they would like us to release it that would be helpful versus leaving it up to our own interpretation.

**Connie Niva**—I think this in one of the most thoughtful groups I've ever been part of and that's great. We need to remember that not everyone is going to get what they want. It is also going to get messy. We need to also remember what it was like when we had the earthquake and need to move ahead with a certain degree of haste. Remember that the longer we inspect the seawall etc, the worse it's going to get. To tear those things up twice wouldn't make sense.

**John Coney**—If C and D are pursued then this will be one of the greatest pedestrian experiences in the NW. Urge planners to keep pedestrians in mind and to look at the stadium.

**Peter Hurley**—I think we can lop off A and B. Redevelopment within the corridor. I don't think there are enough open spaces; let's bring some more people down to the waterfront...housing, jobs, multi-use space. More green, less gray.

**Doug MacDonald**—I want to talk a little bit about the planning paradigm, alternative narrowing. I'm hoping that people won't see that the outcome of this meeting is that we narrowed the alternatives and eliminated A and B. We need a plan first, we need to reconcile people's differences and think about cost etc. Transportation and thereby their solutions are very important. We want to keep as many elements in the planning process as long as we can. We want to be able to mix and match as long as we can. We don't have alternatives A, B, C, and D yet. The process of developing the plan is a broader process and doesn't just take place within the scope of the EIS process. Don't be surprised if we continue to talk about a number of different options. I want to talk about the funding process for a little bit. Our consultant is currently trying to develop a spreadsheet so that we can plug in different options given different funding and plan designs. Federal funding, special source funding from Patty Murray. Tolls are part of the solution but nobody assumed that the project would be paid entirely by tolls. Tom Tierney already knows he's in for half a million.

**Tim Ceis**—Let's not limit options now. In the short amount of time I have been on this project I have found it is amazing how quickly the options change. The Mayor is excited about the opportunity and it will change the face of the city for many years to come. Reconnecting opportunities are great and we should take this time to define this as a broader transportation issue... it will help in federal funding. Tolls will be a part of this process and has to be a part of the funding mix. There is just too much demand and too little money. Thank you for your creativity.